Approved 6/2/26

BOLIVAR TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 5, 2026 at 6:30pm

CHRIS HIGDON, MAYOR

P. JEAN REED, RECORDER
CAROLYN BEYER
VICTORIA GALE
DAN JIMENO
SARAH SHAFER
VACANCY
LAURA WHITTINGTON, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Pledge of Allegiance
Mayor Higdon asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Call to Order
Mayor Higdon called the May 5, 2026 regular meeting of the Bolivar Town Council to order at 6:30pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Treasurers Report
Mayor Higdon asked Laura to give the Treasurers report.
Laura gave this report for the month of March, 2026. The total income was $582,902 and total expenses are $599,856 leaving a loss of $(16,954) mostly due to the $61,000 we just spent on Parks and Recreation and due to the fact not all the deposits that have made it on to the bank statement. Page 2 is your profit and loss. The balance of the financial report explains everything in detail. Mayor Higdon asked for a motion to approve.
Councilperson Victoria Gale moved to approve the Treasurers report as presented by Laura. Councilperson Sarah Shafer seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Town Attorney, Effie Kallas
Attorney Kallas was not present for this meeting.

Sheriff's Department Report and Public Comment
Corp. Hockman gave the following report. We had a total of 115 incidents for the month of April. The following is the breakdown of incidents: 49 Road Patrols, 37 Directed Patrols, 4 Building Checks, 4 Foot Patrol 2 Alarms, 2 Injured Animal, 2 Public Service, 2 Traffic Stop, 1 Disturbance, 1 Drug Activity NIP, 1 Lock Out Resident, 1 Motorist Assist, 1 MVA No Injury, 1 Sexual Assault IP, 1 Suspicious Act.
Corp. Hockman explained there was a call that came in (Sexual Assault IP) but it was not coded correctly, and it will be corrected. Corp. Hockman explained the school emergency threat calls last week. We must answer these calls even though we must respond. We responded to Wildwood Middle School and the next day we responded to Charles Town Middle School. Again, we must respond. Nothing was found and no one has been caught in relation to these calls.

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Report – Superintendent Gosset

One of the most important subjects is the grass rehabilitation started today on Bolivar Heights. We are using Round-Up-Pro to spray. Try to avoid this area for at least 6 hours. If you would like to give your comments NPS concerning the building on Storer College campus. Two permits were issued to Amtrak. Parking may be disrupted due to equipment. On Friday, the John Brown Museum was opened from the front entrance and a new set of wooden steps were built. Last week Legislation transferred jurisdiction of Federal Land on School House Ridge. Two programs will be presented this summer in celebration of 250th celebration. Councilperson Victoria Gale asked Superintendent Gossett about the Round -Up-Pro and asked if they sprayed the berries. Higdon asked about the new buses. Superintendent Gossett said all 6 EB are in use. The problem is we do not have an Electric Charging Station. We are working on that, but it will not be finished until January.

Minutes

Approve Meeting Minutes – April 7, 2026
Approve Special Meeting Minutes - April 21, 2026
Mayor Higdon Asked for any corrections to the minutes of April 7 and April 21. Recorder Reed will make all corrections to the minutes. Mayor Higdon asked for a motion to approve.
Councilperson Carolyn Beyer moved to approve the April 7, 2026 meeting minutes and approve the April 21 Special Meeting Minutes as corrected. Councilperson Sarah Shafer seconded the motion to approve both April 7 and April 21, 2026 meeting minutes. Motion passed 5 – 0

Attendee Concerns
Joe Howsare asked Mayor Higdon and Council to consider some type of PA system because people in the audience cannot hear what we are saying. Mr. Howsare said he has been sitting in the audience for years and this has always been a problem. Mayor Higdon asked Mr. Howsare to send an email to Town Hall so we can have a discussion concerning this matter. Mayor Higdon Thanked Mr. Howsare.

Mayor's Report
This time of the year brings renewed energy, with residents spending more time outdoors, local businesses seeing increased activity and public spaces coming back to life. Our parks, streets and public areas are beginning to reflect that seasonal transition, and I appreciate the efforts of our maintenance staff, our office manager and staff and all council members in all that you have done this year. We are just getting started. Mayor Higdon is looking forward to moving the long-awaited park project forward. Mayor asked Laura to keep track of the lead times and project rolls out to ensure we communicate early and often, as to what we are doing, why, and when it will be completed. Asphalt season is once again upon us…we will pick up with our phase II approach to keep cost in line and streets and problems aligned. More to come on this, but we have contacted vendors to seek pricing. As that process materializes, we will be presenting it to council. We are looking forward to Music in the Park events…June 19th is our first. This is advertised on FB. We are bringing a project back to life, sidewalks, phase II. We have been in contact with *Region 9 about the status of our phase II sidewalks.* I have had the opportunity to engage with a few residents over the last couple of weeks and it has been nice to discuss our town, our vision and simply listen, when it is not all good. Mayor Higdon wanted to thank the council and the public for your continued leadership and commitment to our community. I look forward to working together as we make the most of the season ahead.

Mayor Higdon changed agenda order.

New Business

1. **Jefferson County Development Authority Presentation on child care needs "YMCA" Daryl Cowles, JCDA Director.**

Mr. Crowles is the new director of Jefferson County Development Authority. He would like to update us on childcare issues in Jefferson County.

1. The average wait time in JC for childcare is over 13 months.
2. Currently, we have 142 families waiting for childcare in 17 facilities.
3. Jefferson County continues to grow.

Mayor Higdon asked what the Development Authority is doing to get businesses to help with this problem.
Mr. Crowles said the Development Authority said we are trying to lay the groundwork for this. This will not be an easy problem to solve. Mr. Crowles handed out a flyer from YMCA.
Councilperson Victoria Gale said Jefferson County does not have the infrastructure to handle all this growth.
Mayor Higdon said he feels there needs to be a discussion at County Commission level about Municipalities, that are creating the impact on the County, should have to be a greater contributor to solving this problem.
Mayor Higdon thanked Mr. Crowles for his presentation.

2. **Discuss/Approve donation to JC Park and Recreation for 2026 Firework event**
Mayor Higdon introduced Jennifer Myers from Jefferson County Parks and Rec. Jennifer said she was here to talk about a donation for JC Parks and Rec. for the July Fireworks. Jennifer said this year the fireworks will be held on Friday, June 26, 2026, with a rain date of Saturday, June 27, 2026. The gates will open at 6:00pm, music will start around 7:00pm and the Fireworks will start at approximately 9:15pm. One of our goals is to keep the Fireworks here in Jefferson County. Our beloved Fireworks is a community event enjoyed by Families, Friends, Neighbors, Businesses and Visitors. This is the 20th Anniversary for holding the Fireworks at Sam Michaels Park. We will also be Celebrating our 250th Anniversary of America.
Councilperson Victoria Gale moved to approve $2,500 to Jefferson County Park and Recreation for the Fireworks Event at Sam Michaels Park on June 26, 2026. Councilperson Dan Jimeno seconded the motion. Motion Passed 5 – 0.

Committee Reports
Street Committee
We will be working on repairing and replacing asphalt on our streets.

Bolivar Planning Commission
Barb Staats said they are planning a workshop on ordinances. Next meeting is 7/27/26 at 7:00pm

Park and Recreation Committee
Nothing to report tonight
Canal Town Partnership
Mayor said there would be a meeting of the Canal Town Partnership on Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 12:00pm. The meeting will be held at the John Brown Museum in lower downtown Harpers Ferry. Mayor, Council and some business owners are invited. Please see the letter from Charlma Spence attached.

Water Commission Report
Joe Howsare reported that WV Senator Capito recently provided Harpers Ferry with additional funding for Harpers Ferry Water Works. The Public Service Commission will also have additional funds for Harpers Ferry. We also received a report that we have had a 30% improvement of water leakage since the last report. *The next phase will consist of improvements to water pressure on Bolivar Heights. Steve said they will start putting in the new water meters by the middle of June. Mayor Higdon Thanked Joe and Steve for their reports.*

Board of zoning Appeals
No report

Special Events Committee
Councilperson Sarah Shafer said we have spring cleanup to discuss and Music in the Park. Sarah also mentioned funding of the Memorial Day Parade. Sarah and Mayor Chris both agreed the Memorial Day Parade is sponsored by the Community and it is not funded by anyone, no politics involved. Mayor Higdon said if you give equal time, you did not pick a side then you are okay. Sarah wanted it to be known that this is a 100% volunteer Community event and it is not funded by the town and it is not sponsored by the town but by the community. Mayor Higdon thanked Sarah for her report. Councilperson Carolyn Beyer reported the dumpsters for the town clean-up will be at a different location than last year and Town Hall. We will have three dumpsters this year. This is a public service event for our community. Carolyn thanked Laura for all the help and putting out the signs advertising this. Mayor Higdon thanked Carolyn for all her hard work on this project.

History Committee Report
Jeff Staats said from their last meeting they reviewed the pamphlet again for any changes, updates, or additions. The committee hopes to have the pamphlet available for the June meeting. The committee also hopes to have a little celebration of Simon Bolivar's birthday on July 24. More information coming later. Councilperson Dan Jimeno attended this meeting and was very impressed at all the history available in this little town. Mayor Higdon thanked Jeff and the committee for all the hours of hard work they have given for this project.

Building Inspector Report
No report

Old Business

1. **Discuss/Approve Opioid settlement funds and reporting status.**

Councilperson Carolyn Beyer asked for a motion to approve and begin the process of spending the Opioid money on the Youth Treatment Center, and purchase the Sharp Disposal Box And the remainder of the money goes toward maintaining the box. After a lot of discussion, **Councilperson Dan Jimeno moved to approve $5,000 of Opioid Money be allocated to the Jefferson County Youth Treatment Court and the remaining balance spent to purchase a Sharps Disposal Box and sustained maintenance of the box. Councilperson Sarah Shafer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously 5 – 0**
Note: Mayor Higdon would like to know how this money will be spent, how it will be accounted for and receipted. Councilperson Beyer said we do have guidelines and we will follow them.

2. **Presentation from Ryan Nehar regarding Lantern Festival Event for 2026**

Mayor Higdon read a report from Ryan Nahar with an update on the Lantern Festival. See attached report for complete details.

New Business

3. **Discussion of public nuisances within Bolivar**
   Mayor Higdon said we have some areas around town that really need attention. We will have Attorney Kallas go over all our ordinances concerning nuisances and search for options we might use. Councilperson Carolyn Beyer said she would be willing to work with Attorney Kallas and help research the ordinances. I work with people that have housing problems. Mayor Higdon said this is about respect for your neighbor. We got complaints and we really have not done anything. We have tried several times and have not been successful. Councilperson Gale said we need to look at this as a Public Health issue. Mayor Higdon said he will contact Attorney Kallas and start this process.

4. **Discuss/Approve proposal for concrete pad installation at EPTA bus shelter location**
   Laura said this is for the EPTA bus stop and will be completed as soon as the concrete pad is installed. Laura said we have a quote from Hite's Masonry for $2,600.
   .Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to allocate $2,600 toward the installation of the concrete pad for the new bus stop. Councilperson Victoria Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed 5 – 0.

Adjournment

Councilperson Sarah Shafer moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Victoria Gale seconded the motion. Motion passed 5 - 0. Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm

P. Jean Reed
P. Jean Reed, Recorder

Chris Higdon, Mayor

Next Meeting will be Tuesday, June 2, 2026 at 6:30pm